

# **Parent Support Outreach Program-American Indian Initiative**

## **Final Report**

### **Overview of Project**

The Parent Support Outreach Program-American Indian Initiative was a three-year pilot project that tested the ability of family support services to prevent child maltreatment for at-risk American Indian families. The majority of families served improved in two or more areas of need. The Parent Support Outreach Program-American Indian Initiative was most effective at improving basic needs and resources. Improvements were also seen in mental health/coping skills and family and social support systems. The primary intervention provided to families involved support and resource linkages.

The program began in 2011 and ended Dec. 31, 2013. To be eligible for the program, families:

- Self-identified as American Indian
- Were primary caregivers for at least one child age 10 and under
- Were low income
- Were exposed to one or more risks for child maltreatment, such as:
  - Alcohol or other drug problems
  - Domestic violence
  - Mental health problems
  - Homelessness.

Families were usually identified and served through tribal or community-based American Indian social service providers. A Request for Proposals was published Jan. 4, 2011, seeking county or tribal implementation of the Initiative. Proposals were received from the Leech Lake and Mille Lacs Bands; Ramsey County, with American Indian Center and Ain Dah Yung contracted agencies; and Crow Wing, Aitkin and Pine counties with the Mille Lacs Band. All three proposals were awarded grants or contracts that began in May 2011 and ended Dec. 31, 2013. The start date was delayed by the need for local support development and by the state shut down.

During the full project period, a minimum of 473 American Indian families were served by the three grantees, costing \$585,459 and resulting in positive gains for the majority of the families who received services.

### **Project Enrollment**

Each program was expected to enroll and serve 100 families annually for the last two years of the three-year program. The Mille Lacs Band enrolled its families through Pine County Social Services Information System. Almost all of the families under the program in Pine County were referred and served by the Mille Lacs Band. There were, however, challenges with data entry, so enrollment numbers are estimates from the system. Ramsey County enrolled consistently fewer families than original grant projections and may have over-estimated need.

<b>Families Enrolled</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	19	99	93
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (Aitkin, Crow Wing and Pine counties)	57	63	26
Ramsey County	28	46	43
Total enrolled	104	207	162
<b>TOTAL Project Enrollments 473 families</b>			

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

Project leadership and coordination was provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services staff, Child Safety and Prevention Unit, Child Safety and Permanency Division. Ongoing outreach and technical assistance were provided during the three-year period. Trainings covered the following topics:

- Orientation to program eligibility and components
- Promotion and integration of the six protective factors
- Parent leadership and shared leadership
- Early childhood developmental screening.

### **Service Costs**

The budget for the three-year program was \$1,192,500, with funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Children's Trust Fund, and local funding match by the county or tribe. Overall, grantees were not able to meet enrollment projections, thus the program did not use all available funds.

<b>Expenditures by Grantee</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	\$31,150	\$100,680	\$101,025
Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (Aitkin, Crow Wing and Pine counties)	\$67,402	\$101,875	\$58,845
Ramsey County	\$34,144	\$41,258	\$49,080
Total expenditures by year	\$132,696	\$243,813	\$208,950
<b>TOTAL Project Expenditures \$585,459</b>			

### **Evaluation Results**

An external evaluation was not conducted on the program. The Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Unit, Child Safety and Permanency Division, provided analysis of administrative data to assist with assessing the influence of the program on improving outcomes for American Indian families. Without a research design permitting experimental and control groups, outcomes could not be positively linked to the program. Two key components were assessed for evaluation purposes:

- Changes in domains within the Structured Decision Making Family Strengths and Needs Assessment instrument
- Trend analysis of new child maltreatment reports for American Indian families in the pilot sites.

### **Trend analysis on new accepted child maltreatment reports**

A baseline from 2010 was used as a comparison for the final program year of 2013. The program logic model predicted a reduction of new reports of child maltreatment because of the early intervention services. The number of accepted child maltreatment reports for American Indian children in the grant counties/tribes was examined to note any influence of early intervention services for American Indian families in those communities.

The analysis below shows that the presence of Parent Support Outreach Program had no effect on the rate of accepted child maltreatment reports for American Indian children. However, American Indian children in general had a lower rate of increase (13 percent) than all children statewide (18 percent). The maturity of the program may be a primary influence on the difference in percentages. The counties providing Parent Support Outreach Program involved grantees with well-established programs, many of which received the first round of Parent Support Outreach Program grants in 2005. It is likely that over time, the Parent Support Outreach Program – American Indian Families Initiative sites would follow similar percentage patterns in accepted child maltreatment reporting rates if more time had passed.

### **Number of Accepted Child Maltreatment Reports Involving American Indian Children, 2010 and 2012 Calendar Year Percent Change Comparison**

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of Reports</b>		<b>Percent Change</b>
	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>	
Aitkin	9	13	44%
Crow Wing	15	23	53%
Pine	48	46	-4%
Ramsey	144	200	39%
Cass-Leech Lake	163	209	28%
<b>Total PSOP-AI</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total PSOP*</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total Statewide</b>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>3,409</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Any PSOP</b>	<b>1,309</b>	<b>1,540</b>	<b>18%</b>
* Includes only Parent Support Outreach Program counties active in both 2010 and 2012.			
**Data comprised of all child maltreatment reports by year closed.			
**Number of accepted involved children under age 18 for whom American Indian was identified as a race category.			

### **Improvements in Domains**

Social workers were encouraged to complete two Structured Decision Making Family Strengths and Needs Assessment instruments for each family – one at the beginning and one at the end of their work with a family. Results were examined using only the domains listed as a need by the

worker and family. This data provided a proxy for the types of services being provided to address client needs, and also reflected worker judgment regarding those services that resulted in improved conditions (i.e., domains) for a family. The data revealed that the majority of families improved in two or more domains when opened for case management for 30 days or longer.

Therefore, conditions did improve for the majority of families receiving assistance. A large number improved in two or more domains – regardless of which SDM-FSNA instrument version was used for comparison at pre and post services. These patterns are similar to those seen in the “general PSOP” statewide program.

### **Evaluation Challenges**

Data entry of the instruments was influenced by multiple factors, resulting in a completion rate of 46 percent for the instruments. Factors included:

- The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe had challenges accessing the information system, requiring that data be entered by Pine County staff.
- Ramsey County purged records from the system under an agreement with the department and American Indian Family Services to eliminate concerns that American Indian families with cases in the system would be screened into the child protection system based on previous voluntary services.
- Since the system does not “require/enforce” completion of the instrument in the program workgroups, data is not as complete as it is within Child Protection workgroups, which requires completion prior to workgroup closing.

Of significance, the assessment instrument was revised during the project period. The instrument was updated in May 2012 to reflect inclusion of child well-being domains and consolidation of the number of domains. Due to these changes, the earlier version of the instrument is not comparable to the revised version. Thus, two sets of comparisons across domains were conducted using the two tools discretely. Regardless, improvements in domains were revealed.

<b>Original Assessment Instrument-Percent of Families that Improved</b>	
In at least one domain	82%
In two or more domains	57%
In three or more domains	32%

Using the original version of the assessment instrument (rated per family), improvements occurred most often in:

- Housing/environmental/physical needs – 43 percent
- Family relationships – 39 percent
- Social support systems – 32 percent

However, only 7 percent of families saw improvement in substance abuse, communication and/or interpersonal skills.

<b>Revised Assessment Instrument-Percent of Primary Caregivers that Improved</b>	
In at least one domain	69%
In two or more domains	56%
In three or more domains	42%

Using the revised assessment instrument (rated per primary caregiver), similar improvements were seen, with most occurring in:

- Resource management/basic needs – 50 percent
- Mental health/coping skills – 39 percent
- Social support systems – 33 percent

However, only 14 percent of primary caregivers saw improvements in physical health, 17 percent in alcohol and other drug use issues, and household relationships/domestic violence issues. It should be noted that typically these kinds of concerns require more intensive supports or services to see improvements.

### **Recommendation**

Develop a strategic plan to offer implementation of Parent Support Outreach Program for American Indian families in all 11 federally recognized Minnesota tribes for implementation of early intervention supports and services through the program. The strategic plan should include support components such as access to training, technical assistance, funding and data/reporting capacity.

Currently, the two American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribes, Leech Lake and White Earth Bands of Ojibwe, provide Parent Support Outreach Program supports and services. Expanding to the remaining nine federally recognized tribes would assist in early intervention availability to children in all counties and tribes across the state. This could increase the likelihood of improved family engagement for American Indian families, particularly if tribal programs develop culturally specific materials and outreach approaches similar to that of the [Bimaadiziwin](#) developed by the Mille Lacs Band. Availability statewide would also enhance tribal and county collaboration.